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ABSTRACT

This guide explains the purpose and use of the Individual Career Plan (ICP) document as a tool that students can use from the middle grades onward to help them through the career planning process. Section 1, which provides a rationale for ICPs, examines their role in the career development process and use in the middle grades and high school. Discussed in section 2, which is devoted to implementing the ICP document, are the following topics: components of the ICP document (ICP folder, career planner, educational planner, career skills checklist, cumulative record of assessments, and career and job experiences record); management strategies; middle-grade activities prior to initiating an ICP; high school review activities; and evaluation. Presented in section 3, which covers use of the ICP in the elementary grades, are a rationale for involving the elementary grades in the ICP development process, career development activities, and ICP activities. The final two sections discuss the roles of parents and the community in the ICP development process. Included throughout the guide are samples of all ICP components. (MN)

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The Individual Career Plan Handbook

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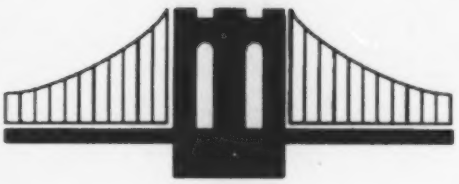

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The Individual Career Plan Handbook

Vocational Instructional Materials Laboratory

Columbus, Ohio

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RATIONALE

Career Development and the ICP

The career development process is an important part of a student's education. This process begins in elementary school with students learning about topics such as appropriate work habits, community and school workers, and ways different workers use academic skills on the job. It continues into high school as students begin to relate the academic and vocational choices they make to their future career goals. The career development process ensures that students understand that the course decisions they make today influence what they will do after high school. This enables students to make more informed and deliberate choices to provide a smooth school-to-work transition, including education beyond high school.

The career development process is not a new educational concept. Career education began in the late 1960s at the national level as a response to high unemployment rates. As employment rates increased in the 1980s and other political issues took the forefront, the interest in career education at the federal level waned. A few states, with Ohio taking the lead, maintained strong career education programs through state and local funding.

In the last two years, there has been a resurgence of interest in career education at the federal level. With the introduction of educational concepts such as school-to-work transition, youth apprenticeship, and tech-prep, policymakers are recognizing the need for a nucleus or core structure to ensure that all students are aware of all career options and can make the best choices for themselves.

Career development personnel in Ohio have identified twelve key topics they feel are important for a student's career education. These topics need to be addressed at all grade levels, K–12, and can be included by teachers in any academic subject. The chart on the following page shows the twelve key topics.

The Individual Career Plan (ICP) document represents a pivotal point in a student's career decision-making process. The ICP is a planning document initiated by the **student,** with input from parents, usually during the eighth

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

K-5 AWARENESS

- Self-Awareness
- Community Involvement
- Decision Making and Goal Setting
- Reduction of Bias
- Employability Skills
- Economics
- Career Information
- Self-Assessment
- Exploration
- Future Trends
- Vocational Orientation
- Academic Planning

6-8 EXPLORATION AND PLANNING

- Self-Awareness
- Community Involvement
- Decision Making and Goal Setting
- Reduction of Bias
- Employability Skills
- Economics
- Career Information
- Self-Assessment
- Exploration
- Future Trends
- Vocational Orientation
- Academic Planning

INTRODUCTION OF ICP DOCUMENT

9-12 PREPARATION

- Self-Awareness
- Community Involvement
- Decision Making and Goal Setting
- Reduction of Bias
- Employability Skills
- Economics
- Career Information
- Self-Assessment
- Exploration
- Future Trends
- Vocational Orientation
- Academic Planning

ICP PROCESS

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grade. It includes a student's tentative career goals and educational plans to reach those goals. The document must be completed by the student and reflect his or her thoughts. Career development activities take place throughout a student's K–12 education to prepare for and reinforce the student's goals.

Current research continually supports the need for individuals to set goals and plan actions to reach those goals. Many of the students labeled "at-risk" in our schools have little or no sense of future. They are oriented in the present, and often cannot envision how their actions today will affect situations in the future. The career development process and the ICP document help all students make those connections for themselves. Through these activities, students learn how the academic choices they make now will impact their own futures. Often, moving towards career goals may be more important than attaining those goals.

The ICP at the Middle Grades

The ICP document is most often initiated by students in the eighth grade. Some school districts choose to begin some parts of the document in grades six or seven.

It is often asked why work on the ICP document is started by middle-grade students. Many initially feel students at this age may be too young to formulate tentative career goals, and that the ICP locks them in to a particular program in their high school years.

All students begin to make academic choices in the eighth grade, whether or not they initiate an ICP. At the end of the eighth grade, students decide what courses they will take in high school. By asking students to indicate their tentative initial career goals, the ICP document helps them make informed and pertinent academic choices in high school. Without the ICP document and career development activities, students make these choices anyway, but often without information or by default. Therefore, rather than narrowing student choices, the ICP document actually expands student choices. A student can take the maximum course work in high school to prepare for individual career goals set by the student, rather than the minimum course work needed to graduate.

High School Review of the ICP

Students often change their minds about their career goals. Through the career development process, students have the opportunity to accommodate those changes by reviewing and revising their ICP document every year in high school. Just as important, they also have the opportunity, through exploration experiences and further research, to validate their tentative career goals.

The ICP document's effectiveness actually depends on students having the opportunity to review and revise it throughout high school. Continued career

development activities help the high school student clearly define career goals and academic choices. These goals and choices usually become more specific and sophisticated as the student not only explores options, but also increases in maturity.

IMPLEMENTING THE ICP DOCUMENT

Components of the ICP Document

The ICP document consists of an accordion folder with four required components and one optional component:

- Career Planner
- Educational Planner
- Career Skills Checklist
- Cumulative Record of Assessments
- Career and Job Experiences (optional)

Completing these components enables the student to record specific information concerning career and academic choices. Additionally, other information can be added to the folder, such as career reports the student has completed and specific career activities performed in the classroom.

The ICP document should include any information a student generates or receives that may influence career choice. All pertinent data about a student's career interests is therefore kept in one accessible location.

An explanation of the folder cover and each component is included on the following pages.

ICP Folder

The ICP folder provides space for the student to include personal information and an educational history. It also lists the required components of the ICP document and other suggested contents.

Points to Consider

- No student should be forced to complete an ICP document, nor should this document be graded. In the box at the top of the folder, a note to the student emphasizes that students do not have to fill in any information they wish to exclude.
- A space is provided in the Educational History section for students to record enrollment in a technical school, college, or university. This is intended for students who are in early placement programs in high school, or who have been notified of acceptance in a postsecondary institute before high school graduation.

Individual Career Plan Folder

This folder is **yours**. It will be kept for you in the school file. When you graduate or transfer to another school, you will take it with you. What you record in this folder will help you complete your educational and career plans. It will also help you complete job applications and resumes. You **do not have to fill in any information** that you choose to exclude. However, the information recorded in this folder will help you monitor your educational progress and your educational and career planning activities.

Personal Information

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Social Security Number _____

Birth Date _____

Educational History

Name of School	City and State
Elementary School(s)	
Middle School(s)	
High School(s) and/or Vocational School(s)	
Technical School and/or College and/or University	

CONTENTS

Required

- Career Planner
- Educational Planner
- Career Skills Checklist
- Cumulative Record of Assessments
  - —Results of Career Interest Surveys and Assessments
  - —Results of "Ohio Ninth-Grade Proficiency Tests" and "Ohio Twelfth-Grade Proficiency Tests"

Recommended

- Photocopy of Annual Progress Reports
- Record of Awards Earned
- Vocational Competency Test Results (if applicable)
- Vocational Evaluation Results (if applicable)
- College and/or Postsecondary Admission Test Results (if applicable)
- Completed Job Application
- Student's Resume
- Letters of Recommendation
- Other Items Deemed Appropriate

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Career Planner

The Career Planner should be the first component a student completes in the ICP document. The Career Planner asks students to initially identify their plans after high school. In the next two items, they must identify career goals and how they chose those goals based on their current thinking. The next three items ask students to identify additional skills and knowledge, where they will obtain those skills and knowledge, and what specific degree or certification they may need. The final item on the Career Planner asks students to then determine whether they will pursue a college path, a vocational path, or a combination of the two.

Completion of these items requires critical thinking skills and more knowledge than is required to simply identify a career choice alone.

Points to Consider

- The student directions at the top of this component include a disclaimer that completion of the ICP document will not guarantee employment in a specific career.
- Students indicate their grade level at the top of the Career Planner. Students should be given the opportunity to complete a new Career Planner at least once a year. Copies of previous Career Planners should be kept in the ICP folder so students can identify patterns in career goals. A student who has not changed career goals does not need to complete an additional Career Planner.
- In the last item, the choice "Combination" can represent a variety of paths. For some students it may mean enrollment in a tech-prep program or a youth apprenticeship program. It could also include students who may not enroll directly in a postsecondary institution, but plan to later. It may also apply to students in very specific fields, such as ballet, who will receive their training outside a traditional educational setting.

Career Planner

Circle one: Grade 8 9 10 11 12

Name_____

Date _____

Planning will help you enter and succeed in a career. Begin your career planning by completing the statements below. Since your career plans may change over time, you will have a chance to complete this form again each year. This document is only a tool to identify career and educational goals. It will not guarantee you employment in a specific job. After completing this form, go on to the Educational Planner.

After high school I plan to

- ☐ 1. Work full-time
- ☐ 2. Work part-time and attend school
- ☐ 3. Attend college full-time
- ☐ 4. Attend technical school
- ☐ 5. Enter the military as a career

My career goals are to

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

My interests, skills, and knowledge supporting my career goals are

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

16

To fulfill my career goals, I will need additional skills and knowledge in

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I will obtain the additional skills and knowledge by taking part in the following educational activities:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I will need a degree, certification, and/or specialized training in

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The information I have given on this form indicates that I will be selecting courses that are primarily

- ☐ **College path**
- ☐ **Vocational path**
- ☐ **Combination**

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• Continue on to the Educational Planner •

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Educational Planner

The Educational Planner should be completed soon after the student fills in the Career Planner. The main objective of this component is for students to make academic choices based on the requirements of their career goals.

Some schools may have students fill in all four years of their Educational Planner in as much detail as possible. Other schools may choose to have students accurately complete the schedule for their upcoming school year, but fill in the ensuing years in less detail. For example, an eighth-grade student planning to enroll in a vocational setting in the eleventh grade would plan a schedule in enough detail to ensure that necessary credit requirements could be met before entry in the vocational program. Another student planning to be an accountant would need to indicate at least one math credit for every year in high school.

The Educational Planner also provides space for students to indicate extracurricular activities, and encourages lifelong learning by asking students to state educational plans beyond high school.

Points to Consider

- As with the Career Planner, students should have the opportunity to complete an Educational Planner each year of their high school career.
- The Educational Planner is printed back-to-back with the Career Planner for two reasons. First, it emphasizes the direct relationship of career goals and educational coursework. Second, these two components are the only two that students have the opportunity to start anew each year (the other components contain cumulative information).
- In the column labeled "Graduation Requirements," students indicate the number of credits or units required by the local district for high school graduation. In the column labeled "Student Choice," students indicate the number of credits or units they plan to take in each curriculum area.
- Every effort should be made to obtain a parent signature on the Educational Planner. Many school districts choose to use the entire ICP document as part of parent-teacher conferences. Other schools send photocopies of the Career Planner and the Educational Planner home with students.

Educational Planner

Circle one: Grade 8 9 10 11 12

Name _____

Date _____

This form will help you decide on the most appropriate educational plan to help you reach your career goals. You will have the opportunity to review your educational plan annually and make any needed changes. A new Educational Planner sheet will be provided to you at that time to make revisions.

Extracurricular experiences and activities to support my career goals:

_____

_____

_____

_____

My education plans after high school: _____

_____

_____

Approval of Plan

I have seen and agree to this Educational Plan.

_____

Student Signature **Date**

_____

Parent or Guardian Signature **Date**

_____

Counselor or Teacher Signature **Date**

Graduation Requirements			9th Grade	Semester			10th Grade	Semester			11th Grade	Semester			12th Grade	Semester		
Student Choice																		
Subject	Units	Units	Subject	1st	2nd	Cr	Subject	1st	2nd	Cr	Subject	1st	2nd	Cr	Subject	1st	2nd	Cr
English																		
Math																		
Science																		
Social Studies																		
Health																		
Phys. Ed																		
Total																		

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Career Skills Checklist

The Career Skills Checklist contains nineteen skills that are important for all students to achieve before graduation. These skills may be taught in different grade levels in each district (they are not arranged according to skill level). However, the career skills a student will need to exit from a secondary school are listed at the bottom of the Career Skills Checklist.

When the student feels comfortable that a skill has been reached, he or she initials the skill in the appropriate grade-level box. A significant adult (parent, teacher, or counselor) should also initial the achieved skill. The first skill must be initialed annually by the student; others may be initialed each year or just once, as needed.

Points to Consider

- Because the ICP is a planning document reflecting a student's thoughts, the Career Skills Checklist is not intended to be an indicator of proficiency. It provides a guideline for students to measure their own progress in achieving career skills.
- The Career Skills Checklist is cumulative: Students should review this component and add to it annually. They should **not** receive a new Career Skills Checklist each year.

Career Skills Checklist

Name _____

Date _____

This checklist can be used to help ensure that you have the skills to develop educational plans and career goals. When you demonstrate specific skills, both you and an adult (your counselor, teacher, or parent) will initial them. Keep this form in your Individual Career Plan Folder so you can assess your skills each year.

Adult *(please initial)*		Student *(please initial)* 9th	10th	11th	12th
☐	**I have reviewed (and changed, if needed) my Educational Planner (required annually).**	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can identify attitudes and skills that employers look for in job applicants.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I know how to use career information resources in the resource center.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I know my work traits and interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I know my academic strengths.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can describe the educational programs available to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can describe the entrance requirements for these programs (including vocational, technical, and college).	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I know the high school graduation requirements.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can identify local job opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can identify job-seeking and application skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can use at least four sources to find educational and career information.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can describe my academic strengths.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I know how to plan for long-range goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I am in a course of study that leads to my career goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I can demonstrate positive job interviewing skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I have discussed my current educational plans and career goals with parents and a counselor and/or teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I have had one or more work, leisure, and/or educational experiences outside of school that relate to my career goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I have discussed my post-high school plan with my parents and a counselor and/or teacher.	☐	☐	☐	☐
☐	I have taken action on my post-high school plan.	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Cumulative Record of Assessments

The Cumulative Record of Assessments provides students space to record all formal assessment results that influence career choice. These include ninth- and twelfth-grade proficiency tests, and specific career interest and aptitude assessments.

In the column labeled "Other," students record the results of any other formal assessments taken in eighth grade or high school that influence their career choices. These could include academic achievement and ability tests and personality inventories.

Students should document assessment results clearly so they can be understood in ensuing years when the students review their ICP documents. Recording actual scores is not recommended, as students may not be able to interpret results from the scores in later years. Instead, an interpretation of the scores should be recorded.

Points to Consider

- It is important that students record the results of these assessments themselves. This ensures they understand the interpretation of their assessment. A counselor or teacher may need to work closely with students to explain the meaning of the results.
- Recording results of assessments is important, even if the results are also included in a student's cumulative records. Students do not have access to their cumulative records to review and compare data on a regular basis.
- Academic achievement and proficiency results can be as relevant as career aptitude and interest assessments. For example, if an eleventh-grade student wants to be an engineer and has not passed the math section of the ninth-grade proficiency test, he or she may want to reconsider career goals.
- In Ohio, a formal career interest assessment is required before the initiation of the ICP document at the eighth grade. At least one additional career interest assessment is required at the high school level.
- In Ohio, at least one formal career aptitude assessment is required at the high school level.

Cumulative Record of Assessments

Name _____

Date _____

Proficiency Tests	Career Interests	Career Aptitudes	Other
9th Grade Reading _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Writing _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Math _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Citizenship _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Science _____ *(Indicate date passed)*	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____
12th Grade Reading _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Writing _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Math _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Citizenship _____ *(Indicate date passed)* Science _____ *(Indicate date passed)*	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____
Comments:	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____
Notes:	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____	Grade Level _____ Instrument _____ Results _____

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Career and Job Experiences (Optional)

The Career and Job Experiences component of the ICP document asks students to record actual exploration activities that influence their career choices. These activities include career fairs, job shadowing, mentorships, paid work experiences, and community service.

Points to Consider

- This is the only component that reflects students' actual activities and experiences, rather than paper-and-pencil tasks. This documentation can provide valuable information to the student.
- Students should not only record data, but also their reactions and feelings about these experiences. They can then compare and contrast their reactions with the different experiences they have had.

Career and Job Experiences

Optional Activities

JOB SHADOWING AND/OR MENTORING EXPERIENCES (Record the name and job title of the person shadowed, your reactions to and the dates of the experience.)

CAREER FAIR EXPERIENCES (Record the job titles of the people you talked to, your reactions, and the date of the fair.)

(continued on next page)

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Optional Activities *(continued from previous page)*

WORK EXPERIENCE (Record the name of the company and/or employer, your job responsibilities, your feelings about the job, and the dates of employment.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE (Record the name of the organization, your responsibilities, your reactions, and the dates of your service.)

Management Strategies

Before implementing the ICP document with students in middle or high school, management decisions need to be made. Questions to consider are

- What educators will take the lead to ensure the ICP document is completed by all students?
- How can time be devoted to the ICP document in an already crowded schedule?
- Where will the actual documents be stored?
- What activities need to take place before the students initiate and review an ICP?

To ensure that no one educator is responsible for the entire ICP and career development processes, a career planning team should be formed in each middle-grade and high school building. This is required in Ohio schools. The team should include two or more teachers, a guidance counselor, an administrator, one or more parents, and career development personnel.

Each building's career planning team then determines the best delivery system for students to work on the ICP document. **Again, a single educator should not assume responsibility for the ICP**. This responsibility needs to be shared by both teachers and counselors, as determined by the career planning team.

In many cases, language arts teachers take the lead for ensuring that students initiate and review the ICP document. This is a natural match because of the writing skills needed for the ICP. A homeroom setting or an advisor-advisee setting is also appropriate for ensuring the ICP document is initiated and reviewed, involving all teachers in the process. Many schools have also incorporated the ICP document as part of the Work and Family unit in Home Economics. Any class that is required for all students is appropriate for implementing the ICP document.

The guidance counselor usually administers the career interest and career aptitude assessments and sees that results are interpreted for students. The counselor may also work on an individual or small-group basis with any students who are having difficulty identifying career goals.

Usually fewer than three class periods are needed for students to complete the Career Planner and the Educational Planner. The time needed decreases as students mature. The Educational Planner can be completed during the time currently used for students to schedule classes. Initiation and review of the ICP document can be done in a group setting and do not need to be done individually unless a student is having difficulty.

ICP documents should be stored where students can access their ICPs, without being able to read other students' ICPs. Possible storage locations include a file cabinet in the homeroom or the room of the teacher who works with the students when initiating and reviewing the ICP, a file cabinet in the counselor's office, or a moveable file that can be transported from classroom to classroom. Some schools store ICP documents in the media center, where students can request their ICPs to use in the library, much like a reference book. The ICP document does not leave the media center with an individual student, but a teacher or counselor can take the ICPs for an entire class.

The ICP should **not** be stored with the cumulative files, as this makes accessibility a problem.

When a student moves to another school or district, the ICP should be transferred with the student's other permanent records.

Specific career development activities need to occur before a student completes an ICP. However, it is important to note that career development activities can be incorporated in every classroom, in every curriculum, K–12. If students have been involved in a variety of these activities since kindergarten, it is much easier for them to initiate and review an ICP document.

Career development activities can take place in the classroom through infusion, events, and career classes. All three methods are valuable techniques for teaching career development concepts to students.

Infusion

Infusion means incorporating a career development concept into a subject area skill that is already being taught. For example, rather than having history students simply write a report on a famous historical figure, have them develop a résumé for the figure. A math instructor teaching percentages can have students determine the average starting salary in the career they are considering, and then compute the percentage of their salary that will go to taxes. In a science class, students can discuss hypothetical situations that would involve ethical decision-making skills of the scientist. In all classes, students can discuss the workers who would use the skills they are currently learning.

Infusion activities often occur without the students even realizing they are learning career development concepts. Infusion requires little, if any, additional instructional time on the teacher's part. It is simply a matter of giving a career development "twist" to what is already being taught.

Events

Career development events often require substantial time and planning, but provide good public relations for the school and are remembered by the student as a career activity. Such events include job-shadowing experiences (spending a

day with a worker in a career of choice), career interest and aptitude assessments, school-wide career fairs, and classroom time devoted to community-involvement experiences. Events usually take time away from regular classroom instruction, but are valuable learning experiences for the student.

Career Classes

Some schools are opting to offer nine-week or semester career classes to their students. These are often elective, although more schools are moving toward making them a requirement. Such courses might include research and reports on careers of choice, career interest and aptitude assessment, employability skills such as developing a résumé and interview skills, and job-shadowing experiences.

Middle-Grade Activities Prior to Initiating an ICP

A variety of activities should take place for the middle-grade student before initiating an ICP. The more career development concepts students have learned in a variety of classes, the better prepared they will be to formulate tentative career goals and educational plans.

Before initiating an ICP in Ohio, students are required to complete the following minimum activities.

- Completion of a research report on at least one career of choice, including educational requirements, employment projections, average starting salary, job responsibilities, and the student's interests and skills that apply to this career. The report should be based on up-to-date information. The use of a computerized career information delivery system, such as the Ohio Career Information System (OCIS), is recommended. This can be done in a language arts classroom and can fulfill a requirement for a written or oral report. In a team-teaching situation, students can research and prepare the report in the class most related to the career choice. Students researching science careers can work with the science teacher, math careers with the math teacher, and so on.
- Formal assessment of career interest with interpretation of results.
- An interview with a worker in the career of choice or a closely related field. The interview can be done over the phone, in person, or in writing.
- A tour of the district's vocational programs. In some schools, this is a general tour of the entire facility. Other schools have students select programs of interest and spend concentrated time in those settings.

High School Review Activities

The annual review of the ICP in high school takes place in much the same way as the initiation of the document in the middle grades. The review usually takes place in a class that all students are required to take. Students should have the opportunity to complete a new Career Planner and Educational Planner if their career goals and educational plans have changed. However, new planners are not required if a student makes no changes in goals or plans, and changes in course selection are minor. Information in the Career Skills Checklist and the Cumulative Record of Assessments must be updated by the student. The Career and Job Experiences component can also be updated.

All classroom teachers and guidance counselors should provide infusion-type career development activities throughout the school year. The following activities are the minimum that should occur before review of the ICP:

- If career goals change, students should complete a research report on the career of choice. This report can be prepared using methods other than a formal, written report. If a student's career goal has not changed, he or she can prepare a report on the "career ladders" (the options or steps a worker takes to advance) in the chosen field, or on alternative and related careers. Students should use resources such as the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and the Ohio Career Information System to gather current information about their career of choice.
- At least one formal assessment of career interest, with interpretation of results, needs to be administered during grades 9–12. Selection of the grade level is the responsibility of the high school career planning team.
- At least one formal assessment of career aptitude, with interpretation of results, needs to be administered during grades 9–12. Selection of the grade level is the responsibility of the high school career planning team.
- At least one career exploration activity needs to occur during grades 9–12. However, it is recommended that a career exploration activity is planned at each grade, 9–12.

  Career exploration includes activities such as job shadowing, interviewing a worker in the career of choice, or attending a career fair to talk with workers in the career of choice and related fields. It is recommended that all students have at least one job-shadowing experience during grades 9–12. Job shadowing gives students the opportunity to actually experience the job and to talk in-depth with a worker.

Evaluation

Students should **never** be given a grade for the ICP document. However, students may be graded on career research reports or paperwork prepared for job shadowing or other exploration experiences.

To evaluate the effectiveness of a school's career development process and the ICP, students in Ohio schools are interviewed to determine if they can articulate their career goals and educational plans to reach those goals. This interview is conducted with a sample of students. Each building's career planning team determines who will conduct the interviews.

Students should be asked three questions during the interview:

What is your career goal(s)?

What courses or classes do you plan to take in high school to reach your goal(s)?

What do you plan on doing after high school to reach your goal(s)?

The interview is an evaluation of the school's career development process, and its purpose is to determine whether students can articulate their career goals and educational plans to achieve those goals. The interview should **not** be used to determine whether the student's career choice is appropriate. The interview should not become a counseling session on career choice for the student.

There are three criteria used to evaluate students' responses: First, students' stated career goals must be legal. Second, these goals must also be income-producing. Third, students' stated educational and post-high school plans must be appropriate to their career goals.

In Ohio, if 75 percent of the students interviewed meet these three criteria, the school's career development process is considered successful.

For more information about the evaluation process including the sample of students, Ohio educators should contact their building career planning team or their district career coordinator.

ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY GRADES

Rationale for Involving the Elementary Grades

The elementary years are vital to the ICP process because skills that students develop at this level prepare them to make educational and tentative career decisions in the middle grades. Some researchers believe that children's work habits and values are formed as early as four years of age. The elementary years then become very important in reinforcing and even remediating those work habits. In addition, recent research indicates that students in elementary years are more open-minded, and that this may be the best time to teach students about bias reduction because they have fewer stereotypes and fewer prejudices. Children at this age are more willing to learn that career choice should be based on individual interest and skill, and not limited by traditional thought.

It is normal and appropriate for children in grades K–5 to be at the "fantasy stage" in their career development. This is the time for them to dream about all career choices. Because elementary students are very interested in what they will do when they grow up, this is an excellent time to broaden their knowledge and expand their options for career choice. Students at this age should be exploring the wide variety of jobs that people hold.

In addition, the elementary classroom lends itself well to career development activities. Elementary teachers usually have an orientation to the whole child and are accustomed to infusing activities of all kinds into the curriculum. The time constraints in the elementary classroom are also not usually as rigid as in later years.

In the elementary grades, an emphasis is placed on self-awareness, employability skills, decision making and goal setting, community involvement, economics, and the reduction of bias.

Career Development Activities

Infusion

As in later grades, career development activities can be infused into all curriculum areas at the elementary level. Some examples are listed below.

- When reading a story, ask students to identify decisions made by main characters that impacted the story's outcome. Also, always ask students what workers they can identify in any story.
- Have students write a business letter to workers in the community. In the letter, ask workers to identify a math problem they use on the job. Students must then solve the math problem.
- Relate the scientific method in science to the decision-making process.
- In art, have students design their own business cards for their careers of choice.
- Use cooperative learning techniques in the classroom and remind students that the inability to get along with coworkers and supervisors is one of the top reasons workers are fired from jobs.
- When studying different countries or states, emphasize workers rather than products or exports.

Events

Although they occur less frequently at the elementary level than in later grades, some types of career events are appropriate and useful in elementary grades:

- Turn any study trip into a career experience by having students identify workers they observe on the trip, and by having students ask workers specific career questions.
- Plan a "Vehicle Day"—Invite various workers who operate a vehicle on the job to park their vehicles on the school playground. During recess or lunch, classes can tour the vehicles and talk to the workers who operate them. Try to incorporate as many industries as possible; for instance, include farm equipment, construction trucks, EMT vehicles, fire trucks, police cars, hearses, and so on.
- Have students come to school dressed as a worker in a career of interest to them.
- Use a display case or bulletin board to feature a "Student of the Month." Include baby pictures, hobby items, family pictures, prized possessions, and so on.

ICP Activities

Although the ICP document is initiated at the middle grades, some school districts start an ICP with students as early as kindergarten. The purpose of the elementary ICP is to record activities in which the student has been involved and to provide a central location for students to write about their interests, strengths, and career dreams at each grade in elementary school.

School districts develop a folder and inserts based on local needs; thus, the folder and contents differ among districts. One district provides a form for teachers to keep in the back of their lesson plans. On this form they document specific career activities provided for the class during the year. At the end of the school year, the teacher duplicates this form for the students. Each student then fills out self-awareness information on the back of the form. The students place the form in their elementary ICPs, after having the opportunity to look over what they have done in previous years and what they have written about themselves. Even kindergarten and first-grade students can do this by having older students transcribe their thoughts on the forms. By the end of the fifth or sixth grade, the students have a record of all their elementary career activities and can review their self-awareness information for similarities over the years.

Other districts have students complete forms with critical-thinking questions on each of the twelve key topics for career development (see p. 2). The forms are kept in the students' elementary ICP folders, which the students can add to and review annually.

In both examples, the elementary ICPs are housed in a central location within the school. The folders and contents move with the students to middle school or junior high and are added to their formal ICP documents.

ROLE OF THE PARENTS

Parents are still the number one influence on children's career choices. With that knowledge, a school's career development process should provide as many opportunities as possible to involve parents.

The membership of career planning teams at both the middle grades and high school should include at least one parent from the school community. All parents should be informed of the ICP document and the career activities occurring in school. Most parents are pleased that the school is providing career information to their children, as parents are often overwhelmed with the current number of career choices.

Every effort should be made to have parents review their children's ICPs. There is space for parents to sign the Educational Planner to indicate their review and approval. Often, review of the ICP is the first time a parent is even aware of a student's chosen career goals. Some school districts provide a pre-printed manila envelope for parents to keep copies of their children's ICPs and other career activities conducted at school.

Other activities can be used with students to encourage parent involvement. These include

- A classroom job treasure chest (a collection of items that parents make at work)
- Family members as classroom career resource speakers
- Family genealogies, including "career trees"—an activity that traces jobs and job patterns in families
- Interviews with family members about their work
- Parent conferences to review student academic skills and work habits
- Job shadowing with a parent or other significant adult
- Workshops for parents on their children's career development

ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

A strong career development program benefits the entire community as students learn needed work habits and attitudes, make more appropriate career choices, and join the community workforce as satisfied and productive workers.

Community members must work in partnership with local schools to make career development programs most effective. By taking an active interest in the ICP and career activities and by lending their valuable expertise, local business and community representatives can add credibility to the entire process. Student activities before initiating and reviewing the ICP include interviewing or shadowing an actual worker in the career of choice. Local businesses must be willing to support these experiences and provide qualified workers who can interact with students.

Many of the career activities identified throughout this handbook require the involvement of community members. Community representation on the career planning team or on a school advisory committee will help ensure the input of business and is highly recommended. Also, keeping the community informed through newsletters and news releases will add to the entire career development program in the schools.

The cooperation between students, schools, and the community epitomizes the mutual benefits of the ICP and the career development process. When the community helps students become better prepared for the world of work, students are more likely to become productive workers, who can then meet the community's needs. This enables schools to become more accountable—to their students and the community.

When all is said and done, everyone wins with the ICP and career development process.